CERTAIN

# CONSIDERATIONS

Relating to the ROYAL

# African Company

OF

# ENGLAND.

In Which,

The Original, Growth, and National Advantages of the *Guiney* Trade, are Demonſtrated:

As Alſo

That the ſame Trade cannot be carried on, but by a Company and Joint-Stock.

Printed in the Year, MDCLXXX.

# The Deſign of this Treatiſe is,

I. To open the Original and Growth of the *Guiney* Trade.

II. To demonſtrate the Utility and Advantages which redounds to the Nation by tht Trade

III. That the ſame National Advantagious Trade cannot be ſecurely carried on but by a Com pany and Joint-Stock.

NO Man ever doubted but that Forreign Trade and Commerce is the great Concern and Intereſt of every Nation, becauſe the Increaſe and Wealth of all States, is evermore made upon the Forreigner, for whatſoever is gained by one Native from another in one part of this Kingdom, muſt neceſſarily be loſt in another part, and ſo the publick *Stock* nothing there-by Augmented. But Trade and Commerce cannot be maintained or increaſed without Government, Order, and regular Diſcipline; for in all confuſed Traffique it muſt neceſſarily happen, that while every ſingle Perſon purſues his own particular Intereſt, the Publique is deſerted by All, and conſequently muſt fall to Ruine. For which Reaſon, the Crown hath Erected and Eſtabliſhed Fraternities or Companies of Merchants, with Grant of Priviledges excluſive to all others, as His Majeſties Anceſtors and Himſelf by

by their Royal Charters have been Graciouſly pleaſed to do to the Royal *African*, *Eaſt-India*, *Turkey*, *Hamburgh*, *Eaſtland* and *Muſcovia* Companies; and the United Wiſdom of the whole Nation in Parliament have thought fit to approve thereof, by confirming ſome of them by Publique Act: And the late Parliament did allow the ſame Policy, as appears by an Act, Intitled *An Act Declaratory concerning Bankrupts, made in the* 14th. *year of His Majeſties Reign, for the encouragement of the* Eaſt-India *and* Guiney *Companies.* And that the Nobility and Gentry might not be diſcouraged in their Honourable Endeavours of Adventuring their Money in the ſaid Societies, did exempt them from being ſubject to the Statutes againſt Bankrupts: And did therein further declare, That by ſuch Undertakings, Navigation was Increaſed, and the Publique Good of the whole Kingdom very much advanced. And by another Act of the ſame Parliament made in the year of His Majeſties Reign, they thought fit to own the *African* and *Eaſt-India* Companies, by Taxing their Joint-ſtocks by Name.

First.

## The *Original and Growth of the* Guiney *Trade.*

THE firſt Charter relating to the *Guiney* Trade, was Granted by King *James* in the *16th.* year of his Reign, unto Sir *Robert Rich* and others, with expreſs Excluſions and Prohibitions to all other His Majeſties Subjects upon Forfeiture of Ship and Goods.

His late Majeſty, King *Charles* the firſt of Bleſſed Memory, in the 7th. year of his Reign, Granted another Charter to *Humphrey Slaney*, *Nicholas Criſp*, and others, with the like Excluſions and Penalties; This Charter was confirmed and exemplified to *Rowland Wilſon* and others in the year 1651. by the Power then in being. After which by the many Revolutions of Government here, the Trade of *Guiney* fell into great diſorders, and the ſtock of that Company was much impaired by the intruſion of Interlopers; which the *Dutch* and *Danes* obſerving, encreaſed their Number of ſtrong Forts, Factories and ſhips of War on the *Coaſt of Guiney*, and thereby did not only defend and encourage their own, but during thoſe times took alſo the ſhips and Goods of the *Engliſh* private Traders, to the value of 300000 *l.* or thereabouts, as was made appear to his Majeſty after his happy Reſtauration, and afterwards complained of to the Parliament.

*Whereupon*, His Majeſty was graciouſly pleaſed in the year 1662. to invite all his Subjects to the ſubſcription of a new Stock, which being accordingly done, his Majeſty in the ſame year Granted a new Charter with the ſame Immunities as before; But the *Dutch* War in two or three years after breaking forth, about 200000 *l.* of the ſaid Stock, and ſome of the Forts which that Company were there poſſeſſed of, were ſeized and taken by eleven great *Dutch* Ships of War, ſent thither on purpoſe, under the Command of their Admiral *De Ruyter*, whereby the whole Trade was in Eminent danger to be

be loſt to this Nation. His Majeſty then taking notice of the Difficulties which that Company labour'd under; not only as they related to the Natives who are a Barbarous and Infidel People (with whom his Majeſty hath no Articles of Peace and Commerce) but alſo as they related to the *Dutch* and *Danes*, whoſe Intereſt it was with all their Induſtry and Puiſſance, to ruine the *Engliſh* Commerce there. And conceiving he could not better prevent ſo great a Calamity and Danger, then by erecting a new Company, That ſo with the united ſtrength of a great and conſiderable Body of Men and a ſufficient Stock, a matter of this weight and importance might be ſupported, His Majeſty in the Year 1672. was Graciouſly pleaſed Publickly to invite all his Subjects, as well reſiding in Forreign Plantations as here at home, to ſubſcribe what ſums of Money they pleaſed in the ſaid New Stock; And the Book for Subſcriptions lay open to that purpoſe for Nine Moneths, and accordingly the preſent Stock being ſubſcribed, by many of the Nobility, Gentry and Merchants, His Majeſty Granted the preſent Charter with the ſame Excluſions and Priviledges as before; Out of which Stock ſatisfaction being given to the former Company for all their Caſtles, Forts and other Remains by Agreement made with them, their Charter was ſurrender'd, and the Trade ever ſince hath been carried on, the Forts ſupported, new Fortifications rais'd, and the *Engliſh* Intereſt there, much enlarged by this preſent Company at their very great expence.

Secondly.

## *The Publique Utility and Advantages of the Guiney-Trade.*

FOR the Utility and AdVantages that redound to the Nation by the *Guiney* Trade: They are ſuch as theſe.

I. The Exportation of our Native Woollen and other Manufactures in great abundance, moſt of which were imported formerly out of *Holland*; but have of late Years (by the preſent Companies Direction) been Manufactured at home: And for the greater expence thereof, have given expreſs Orders to their Factors at *Guiney* to underſel all other Nations; whereby the Wooll of this Nation is much more conſumed and ſpent then formerly; and many Thouſands of the poor People imployed.

II. The Importation of Gold, Elephants Teeth, Wax, and other uſeful Commodities thereby diſcharging this Nation of ſuperfluities, and making compenſation in things of Neceſſity and Conveniency, is a double advantage.

III. By the *Negro* Trade the Company yearly at very reaſonable Rates, furniſh with vaſt Numbers of Servants all His Majeſties *American* Plantations, and that upon large Credit and Time given to the Planters for Payment; who at this preſent owe to the Company more then One Hundred Thouſand Pounds Sterling, whereby they are enabled to carry on their Plantations to much greater advantage, which Credit neither ever was, nor probably will be given in like proportion by Private Traders, by which all the Plantations do flouriſh more then formerly. A great increaſe is made to His Majeſties Revenue, and to the Wealth of this Nation. So that the Riches of that part of the World, (being the reſult and product of Induſtry and Labour) is in good Meaſure Owing to the *Royal African* Company. Beſides that, it hinders the exhauſting this Nation of its natural born Subjects.

The Advantages accruing to the Nation by the *Guiney* Trade, as they relate to the increaſe of *S*hipping, and *S*eamen, ( though very conſiderable ) are not here inſiſted upon, becauſe they are productions common with the other *S*ocieties of Merchants of this Realm.

Thirdly.

*The Guiney Trade loſt, to this Nation unleſs carried on by Company and Joynt-Stock.*

THE Advantages then accruing to the Nation, and His Majeſties *American* Plantations by the *Guiney* Trade; being ſo great and important as are here proved. It comes now in the third place to be demonſtrated, that the ſame great and important advantages muſt be inevitably loſt, unleſs the Trade be carried on by way of a Company and Joint-ſtock.

Firſt, by long experience it is evident this Trade cannot be carried on but by a conſtant maintaining of Forts upon the place, and Ships of warre to protect the ſhips of Trade, and this is occaſioned by reaſon of the Natural perfidiouſneſs of the Natives, who being a Barbarous and heathen people, cannot be obliged by Treaties without being awed by a continuing and permanent Force, And partly becauſe the *Dutch*, *Danes*, *French*, and other Nations, that likewiſe Trade in the ſame Country, are ever more vigilant for their own profit, frequently inſtigating the Natives againſt us, as well as by their own force, to extirpate and deſtroy the *Engliſh* Commerce there, as the *Dutch* did the *Engliſh* Factories in the Spice Iſlands and other parts of *India*, for want of a Conſtant force to protect them, which could never ſince be regained, they attempted the ſame in *Guiney* and forceably poſſeſt themſelves of the Caſtle of *Cormantine*. The charge of maintaining this Force doth *Communibus Annis* amount to more then 20000 *l.*

20000 *l.* a year in time of peace, and muſt needs be much more in time of Warre: And it cannot be imagined that private perſons who are *ad libitum*, can have either will or ability to defray a ſtanding expence of this Magnitude. Beſides it will not onely be impracticable to know what proportion of Tax to lay upon every private Trader or ſhip upon ſuch occaſions, but alſo it will be uncertain to find whether the Trade will anſwer the charge to be impoſed, becauſe Trading or not Trading, and for what value, will depend meerly upon the will and diſcretion of ſuch Private Traders; And it will undoubtedly fall out, that when the charge is higheſt the Income will be loweſt, as in time of Warre, either *Native* or *European*, which may be expected, and muſt be provided againſt. For when the danger and charge of ſupporting the Trade is greater then the preſent profit, thoſe private Traders will deſiſt, and conſequently for want of ſupplyes to defend the Forts, *&c.* the whole *Trade* in *Guiney* muſt be inevitably loſt, and all the *Engliſh* intereſt there fall into the hands of Enemies. And (to ſay nothing of the Diſhonour and Shame) how great *Dammage* and *Debilitation* that would prove to this Kingdom and the *Plantations*, may be computed by what hath been before ſaid of the *Utility* and *Advantages* redounding to this *Nation* and the *Plantations* by the *Guiney Trade*. But in the continuance of the *Preſent Company* and *Joint-Stock*, ſo great a misfortune can never probably happen, for there is a Stock of at leaſt 150000 *l. ſterl.* conſtantly engaged, and under the command of the Governours and Committee by common conſent of the whole Company to be imployed for the proſecution and neceſſary Defence of the Trade, a conſiderable part whereof alwayes remaines in their Forts and Caſtles for that purpoſe.

Secondly, (Becauſe Contraries alwayes appear beſt by Oppoſition, and the happieſt experiences are thoſe which are gained by the Calamities of other Men.) It is to be remembred in thoſe times before the Charter in 1662 what Advan-

 tages

tages the *Dutch* took againſt the private Traders, whoſe loſſes as is beforeſaid, amounted to no leſs then 300000 Pounds, as by their ſeveral Petitions and Complaints to the Houſe of Commons was alledged: and the Trade being then almoſt loſt, great Endeavours were uſed by His Majeſty for the Subſcription of a New Stock. The like happened before to the *Eaſt-India* Trade from the Year 53, to 57, upon an open Trade uſed in thoſe Years; from the Diſorders and ill Succeſs of which looſeneſs of Trading; the Powers then in being preſently united them into a Company and Joynt Stock again; and ſince by his Majeſties Charter have ſo continued to this day. And how dangerous it will be to make a ſecond Experiment after the ſence of many Palpable Inconveniences and Miſchiefs by the Firſt: let the World Judge.

Thirdly, The maintaining of Forts and Ships of War, being of ſo great charge, and yet ſo Eſſential to the defence of the *Guiney* Trade, the Company cannot be able to defray the charge of the ſaid Forts and Ships, if they may not enjoy the benefit of their Grant with excluſion to others.

Fourthly, There was never yet any ſubſtantial Commerce in the VVorld carried on, but by the means of mutual Alliances and Confederations made with the *Natives* how Barbarous ſoever. Now it is manifeſt that Allyances and Confederations of this Nature, can be made only by Princes themſelves, or by Powers derived from them, to Bodys Politick and Communities, who are Stable, Permanent and Reſponſible; and continually ready upon the place by their Agents to expoſtulate with, or give ſatisfaction to their Allyes, and never can be maintained with individuals and ſingle Perſons, who are Tranſient and Mortal, and no Man knows where to find them when they have committed Injurys; an inſtance of which kind happened not long ſince upon the Coaſt of *Guiney*, when ſome conſiderable Natives coming aboard ſome private Traders Ships, they forthwith caryed them away, and ſold them at the Plantations for Slaves; which perfidious action was afterwards revenged upon the Companies innocent

innocent Servants and Ships, ſome of his Majeſties good Subjects having been Murder'd upon the ſame Account, and others kept long in Bondage, and Ruined in their Eſtates.

*Laſtly.* Our Neighbours of *Holland* who ſo much Covet and Solicite Trade, will be glad to ſee this Incloſure broken down, and a looſe and open Trade permitted here to *Guiney*, as foreſeeing that thereby the *Engliſh* (their moſt formidable and puiſſant Competitor) muſt inevitably at laſt abandon that Trade, and therefore doubtleſs would be content to purchaſe the diſſolution of the Royal *African* Company with a greater ſumme of Money than ever was ſubſcribed to ſupport it. But yet (contrary to the Native Humour and Genius of a Republique) they themſelves do oblige their own Subjects to Traffique by way of Company and Joint-ſtock, both to the *Eaſt-Indies* and *Guiney*, Endowing them with great Immunities, and obliging themſelves to aſſiſt their *Guiney* Company with ſixteen Ships of War, at the States Expence, upon any Emergency, as well knowing that there is no other ſecure way of Trading to thoſe parts. The King of *Denmark* alſo hath done the like in point of Company and Joint-Stock; And (which perhaps is more Important than all the reſt, and ought to make the deepeſt Impreſſion in the Minds of all *Engliſh* Men) the *French* King, who now Courts Trade beyond all his Predeceſſors, is Erecting a Company for management of a *Guiney* Trade by a Joint-Stock with Vaſt Incouragements and Immunities granted to them, and Excluſion of all other his Subjects. So that if our Forts, Factories, and Trade, be not ſecured againſt the Attacks and Invaſions of three ſo Puiſſant Nations (which, as is effectually demonſtrated before, cannot be done but by a Company and Joint Stock) we of *England* muſt quickly bid a final Adieu to all future Trading upon the Coaſt of *Guiney*.

From

From all which hath been ſaid, it is hoped it doth plainly appear,

Firſt, That this Trade Incorporated in a Company, is in its Conſtitution, National.

Secondly, That without Forts and Force by Land and Sea, it cannot be ſecured to the Kingdom.

Thirdly, That without a Charter Excluſive to all other His Majeſties Subjects, upon ſufficient Penalties, and a large Joint Stock to ſupport the Charge, thoſe Forts and Forces cannot be maintained.

Fourthly, That not only all the Powers in force in this Nation, whether Legal or Uſurped, ever ſince the *Trade* of *Guiney* hath been diſcover'd, but all *European* Nations uſing any conſiderable *Trade* thither, have, and ſtill doe unanimouſly Proſecute the ſame by a *Company* and *Joint-Stock*, Excluſive to all other their Subjects.

To Conclude, It is an eaſie thing to unſettle and deſtroy a *Trade* not without great Labour, Danger, and Expence acquired, But it will be very difficult to regain it if once loſt, eſpecially this of *Guiney*, which all our Neighbour Nations ſo earneſtly thirſt to gain from us, and which if deſerted but for one moneth, would certainly be poſſeſt Either by the *French* or *Dutch*, ſo as not likely to be regained from them. And therefore it is hoped it will be maturely and ſeriouſly conſidered how great a dammage the loſs of this Trade would be to the Kingdom, and how dangerous the unhinging the preſent Conſtitution thereof may be.

*FINIS.*